

North Korea Flooding at *Kyo-hwa-so* No. 12, Jǒngŏ-ri

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THE COMMITTEE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA
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North Korea: Flooding at *Kyo-hwa-so* No. 12, Jǒngǒ-ri

The recent flooding in the northeast province of Hamgyǒng-bukto, North Korea, as a result of Typhoon Lionrock, has highlighted the vulnerability of this remote section of the nation to natural disasters. This vulnerability has been exacerbated by the historically limited resources expended on civil infrastructure in this area by the central government in Pyongyang. Although the government has responded, the scope is so large that North Korea has made public the extent of the disaster and is soliciting assistance from the international community.

While the vulnerability of the average citizen in this remote section of North Korea is amply demonstrated by North Korean media, what has, of course, not been addressed is the even more acute vulnerability of prisoners held in the North's notorious *kwan-li-so* and *kyo-hwa-so* prison camp system—specifically, *Kyo-hwa-so* No. 12, Jǒngǒ-ri, located south of Hoeryǒng City.

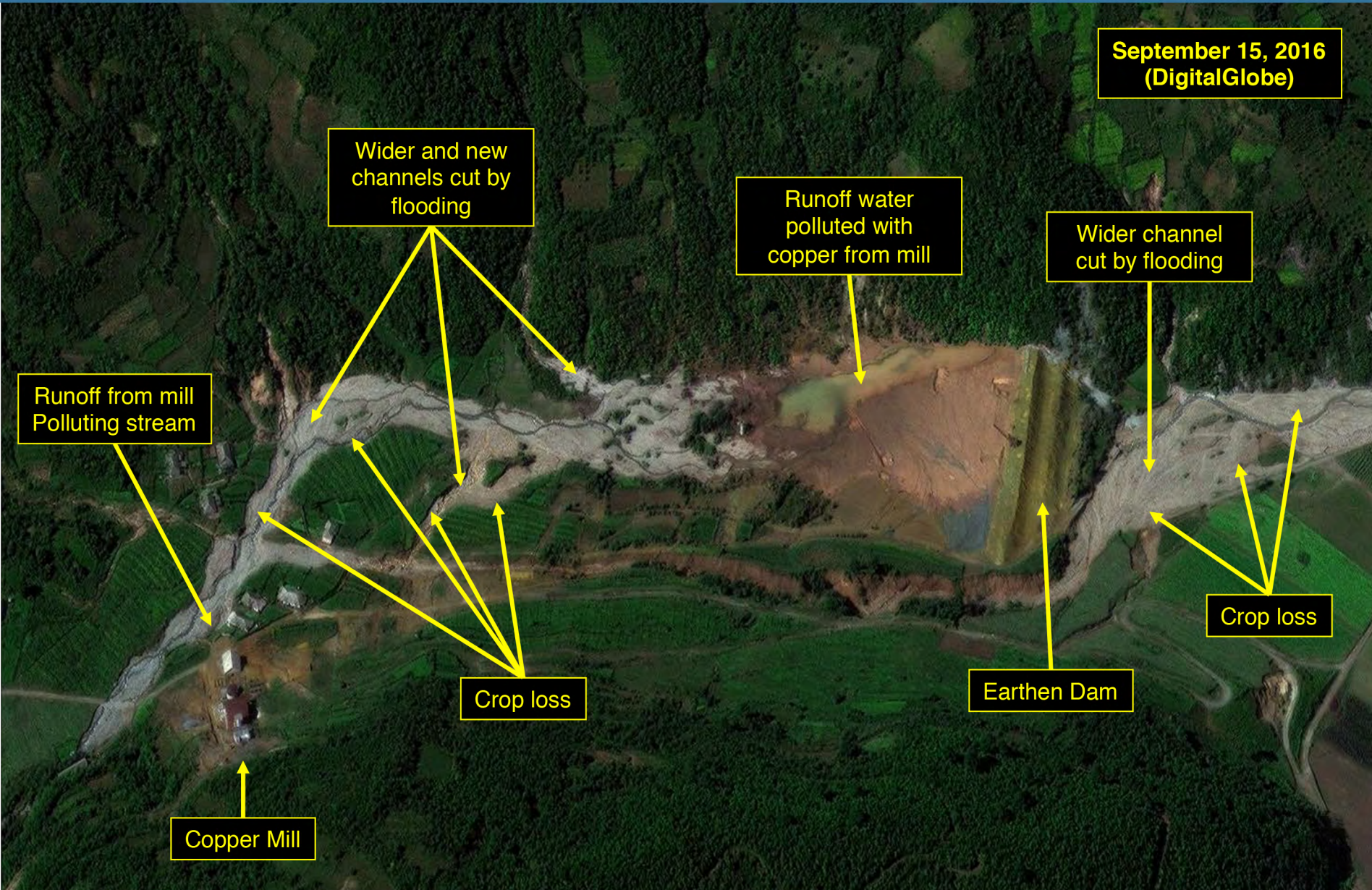
Run by the North Hamgyong Provincial Bureau, under the Prisons Bureau of the North Korean Ministry of People's Security, *Kyo-hwa-so* No. 12, Jǒngǒ-ri is located about 490 km northeast of the capital city of Pyongyang, and approximately 25 km south of Hoeryǒng City. It consists of two primary facilities: a walled prison facility commonly known as "Jongo-ri," and a copper mine situated in a small branch valley a short distance south of the prison facility. The walled prison facility measures approximately 188 meters by 128 meters (205 yards by 139 yards), encompasses 2,360 hectares (28,230 square yards), and is encased by three-meter-high walls, four elevated guard positions, and two exterior entrances. *Kyo-hwa-so* No. 12 prison population estimates have ranged from 1,300 in the late 1990s to about 5,000 in recent years.

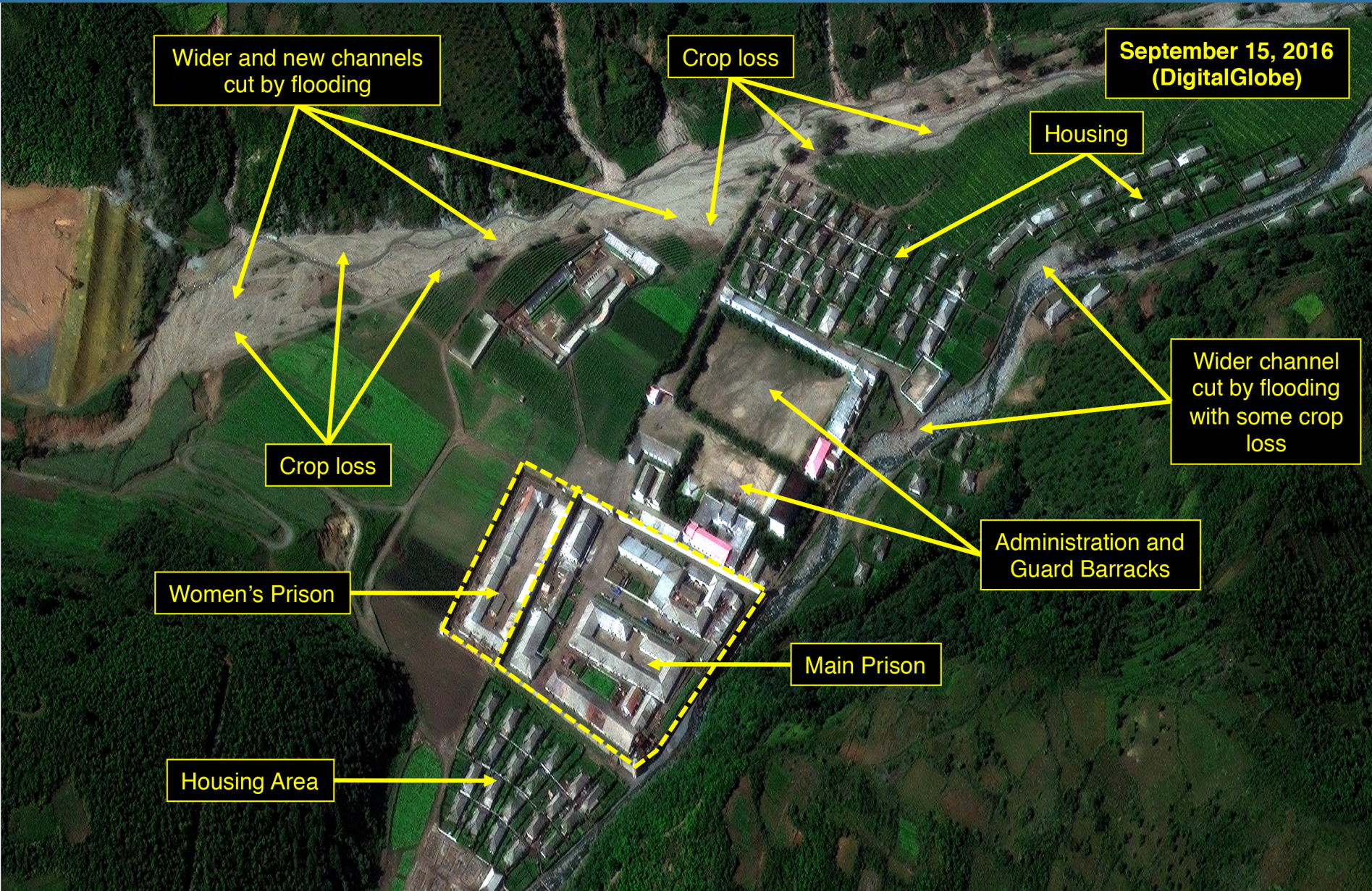
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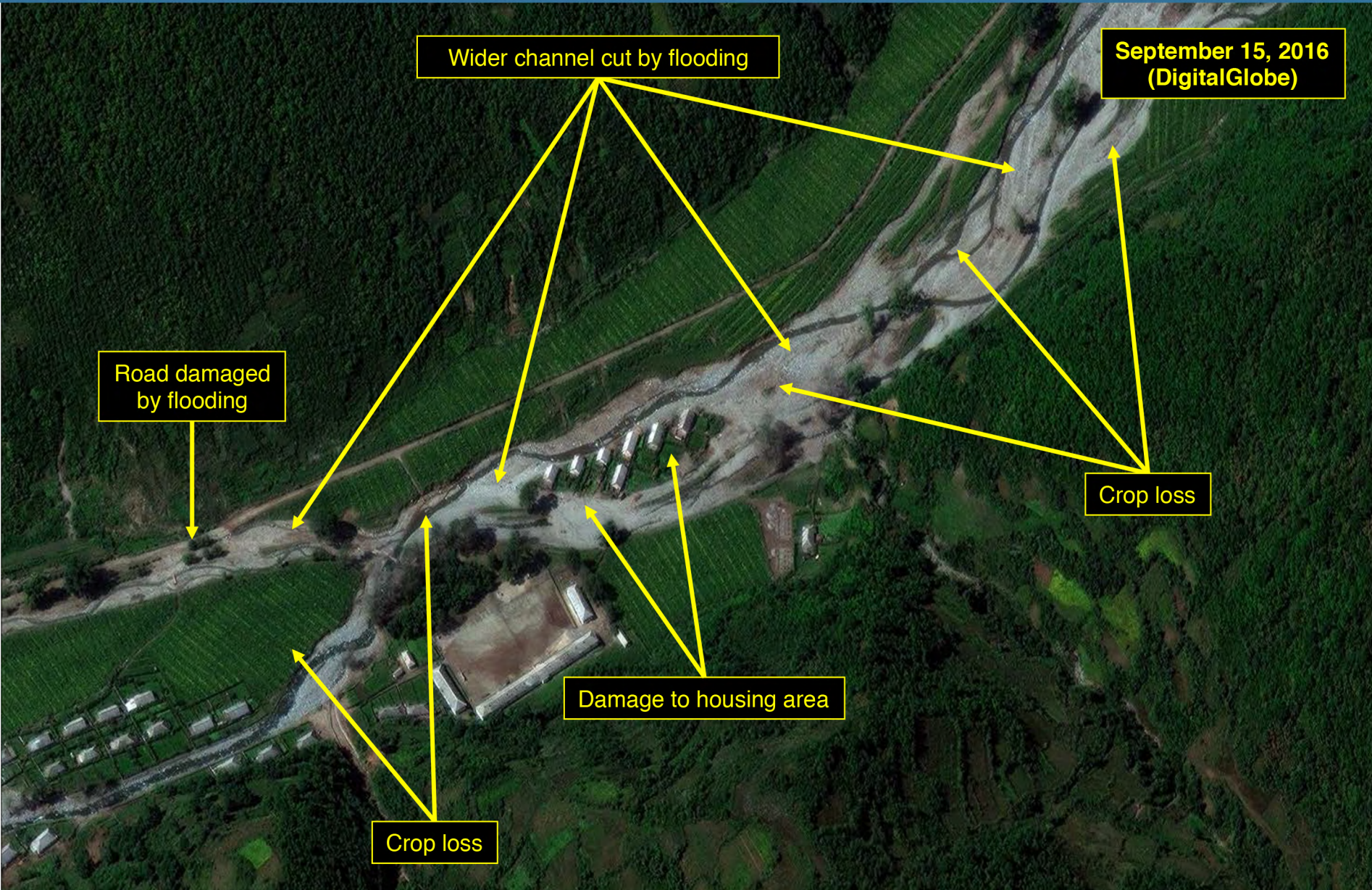
Recent satellite imagery acquired by DigitalGlobe highlights the effects of flooding on this remote prison facility. The camp is located at the confluence of two small streams that have overflowed their banks and have reached several agricultural support buildings and housing areas. The only road into the camp appears to be flooded in at least two locations, which most certainly inhibits access and the delivery of supplies to the camp's population. Due to this flooding, wider and new channels have been cut that are impacting nearby agricultural fields resulting in crop loss. This crop loss may have exacerbated the already severe food shortage for prisoners in the camp. Furthermore, the water level in the waste pond from the nearby copper mine has risen. Satellite imagery indicates that water runoff from the copper mill is also polluting at least one stream. This, in turn, raises the concern for possible health issues for persons living and working along the stream.

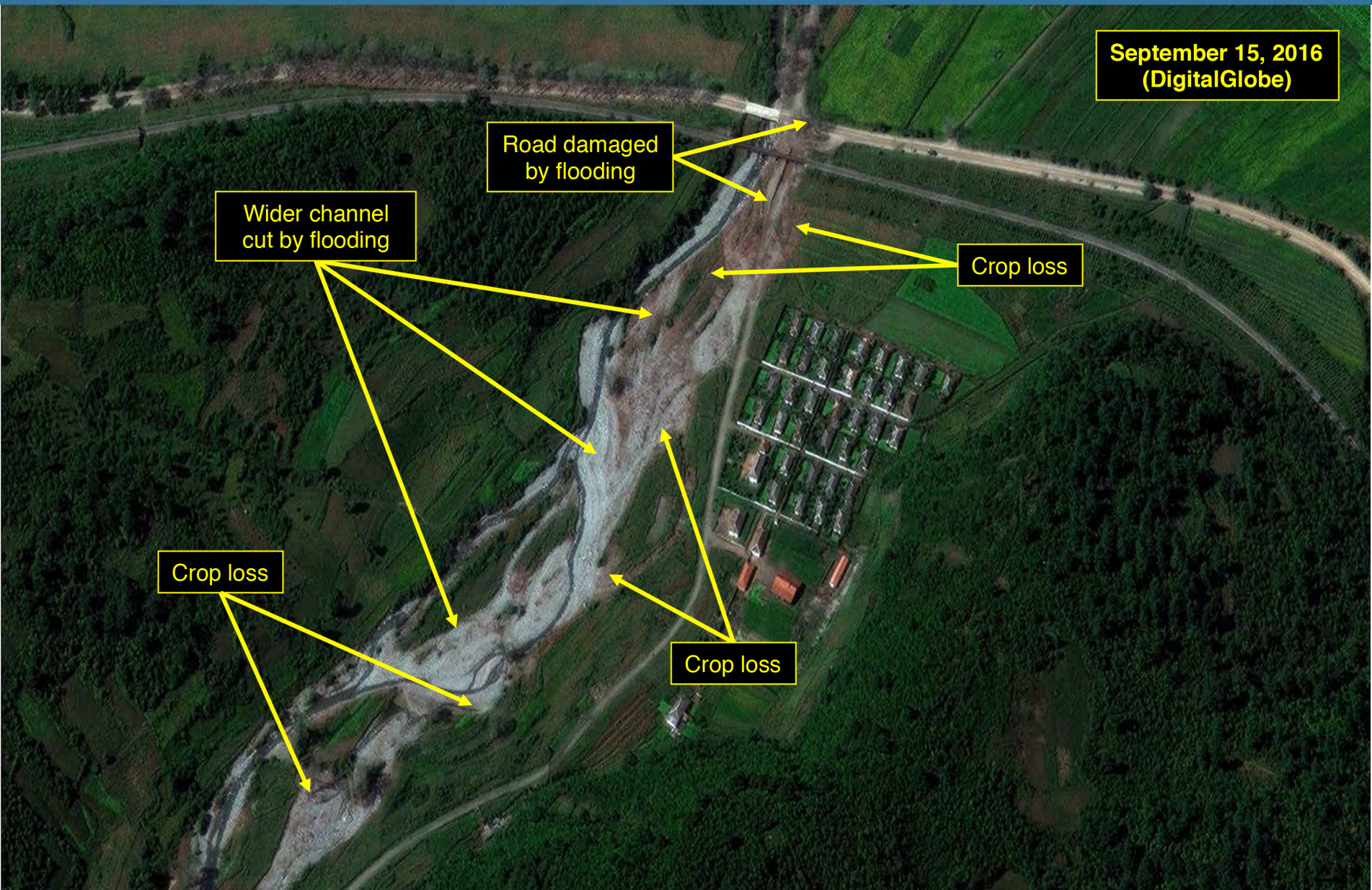
The vulnerability of *Kyo-hwa-so* No. 12 prisoners to flood damage is a stark reminder of the need for a UN Human Rights Up Front (HRuF) approach to humanitarian assistance in North Korea. Introduced by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the end of 2013, HRuF calls for a UN system wide strategy when serious violations of human rights are found in a country. All UN agencies and offices are expected to become involved to advance human rights on the ground, provide candid information, and develop a common UN system for information.

The damage and urgent need for humanitarian assistance caused by Typhoon Lionrock serves as an opportunity to implement the HRuF approach. As a result, it is essential that humanitarian agencies integrate the principles of non-discrimination in the distribution of food and other services into their programs and obtain access to the most vulnerable persons—in this case, those in the *kwan-li-so* and *kyo-hwa-so* prison camps. UN agencies and international NGOs disbursing emergency humanitarian assistance to North Korea must seek ways to include detention facilities in the scope of their disaster assessments and interventions. Every effort must be made to ensure that prisoners in *Kyo-hwa-so* No. 12 receive aid.









September 15, 2016
(DigitalGlobe)

Road damaged
by flooding

Wider channel
cut by flooding

Crop loss

Crop loss

Crop loss



September 16, 2016



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Since its establishment in 2001, HRNK has played an important intellectual leadership role on North Korean human rights issues by publishing more than thirty major reports (available at <http://hrnk.org/publications/hrnk-publications.php>). HRNK became the first organization to propose that the human rights situation in North Korea be addressed by the UN Security Council. HRNK was directly, actively, and actively involved in all stages of the process supporting the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry. In the past five years, HRNK has been invited numerous times to provide expert testimony before the U.S. Congress.

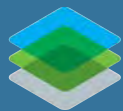
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